

Alaska Department of Military & Veterans Affairs

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NEW ANTI-TERRORISM TASK FORCE EMERGES

Federal, State, & local governments combine efforts to protect Alaskans

CAMP DENALI, Alaska – United States Attorney Timothy M. Burgess and Brigadier General Craig Campbell, Adjutant General and Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Military & Veterans Affairs announced today that the Governor Frank H. Murkowski's Homeland Security Task Force and the federal Anti-Terrorism Task Force are merging to better protect Alaskans from the threat of terrorism.

The announcement came following the first formal meeting of the new group, known as the Antiterrorism Task Force of Alaska, at the Anchorage Armory, at Camp Denali, on Fort Richardson. The purpose of the merger is to "facilitate communication, avoid duplication of effort and ensure adequate and timely responses to prevent any future terrorist incidents in the state," according to U.S. Attorney Burgess.

"Our two organizations have worked well with each other. Now, it is going to be one team for the benefit of all Alaskans. We can communicate directly across all federal, State, and local government lines, ensuring quick response to potential security threats," Campbell said. He also noted that private industry is being consulted by the group about protection of critical infrastructure and services throughout Alaska. "As far as we know, this is the first time in the nation that an existing State and federal antiterrorism task force have combined," Campbell added.

Burgess said law enforcement in Alaska has always worked together collaboratively to solve the challenges presented by geography and weather. "That type of collaboration is now being extended to the fight against terrorism," he said.

Currently, 60 agencies and offices are members of the task force. They include representatives of most federal and state enforcement agencies in Alaska, in addition to representatives of local government and private industry involved in transportation, infrastructure, and communications throughout the state. All branches of the military are participating.

The purpose of the task force is to protect the state's citizens, resources and infrastructure, according to Burgess. This is accomplished through the sharing of information, prevention of terrorism, and emergency preparedness in the event of a terrorist incident, he said. The group will meet in general sessions monthly, while subcommittees will meet more regularly.